

EA-6.

# AIRGRAM

POK 35-1 BURMA-THA.

RM/R	REP	AF
ARA	EUR	FE
NEA	CU	INR
E	P	IO
L	FBO	AID
AGR	COM	FRB
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR
ARMY	CIA	NAVY
OSD	USIA	NSA

55

2

5

4/5

3

20

5

33

10

3

7/5C

6

FOR RM USE ONLY

A-29  
NO.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

GD/F

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Amembassy, BANGKOK

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : Department of State, WASHINGTON  
Amembassy RANGOON  
Amembassy VIENTIANE  
Amconsulate MANDALAY

JUN 14 12 40 PM 1967

RS/AN  
ANALYSIS BRANCH

FROM : Amconsul, CHIENGMAI

DATE: June 6, 1967

SUBJECT : Burmese-Thai Disagreement Over Dams on the Mae Sai River

REF : Thai Political

1. A disagreement between the Thais and Burmese in Amphur Mae Sai has developed recently over the construction of two temporary dams by the Thais on the Mae Sai River. No serious incident has occurred but the presence of armed Burmese soldiers and angry Thai officials makes the situation somewhat tense.

2. Thais living in the Mae Sai Valley in northern Chiengrai Province have long wanted a dam across the river but have never gotten official Burmese consent. After repeated diplomatic efforts had failed, the Thais finally got the local Burmese Army commander at Tachilek to give verbal permission to build a temporary dam.

3. In building the dam, which they located about 300 meters above the Mae Sai-Tachilek bridge, the Thais put the spillway on the Burmese side and this resulted in the north bank being gradually eroded. The Burmese viewed this unfavorably and this year when the Thais began construction, three platoons of the Burmese Army were moved in to prevent them from building more than half way across the river. The border legally runs down the middle of the main channel of the river.

4. Also about seven kilometers below the bridge, at Pah Sang, the Thais built a second dam from the Thai side of an island. This forced all the water to flow into the channel on the Burmese side of the island and the Thais then treated the island as Thai territory.

GROUP III

Downgraded at 12-year intervals,  
not automatically declassified

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FORM  
4-62 DS-323

FOR DEPT. USE ONLY

☒ In ☐ Out

Drafted by: VTomseth:skb

Contents and Classification Approved by:

DCELLSON

Clearances:

POL: (Amembassy) DOrwick

Page 2  
A-29  
from Chiangmai

CONFIDENTIAL

The added volume of water also caused the Burmese bank on the north side of the river to be eaten away. Recently, the Burmese tore down the Thai dam and built one of their own, thus diverting the river into the channel on the Thai side of the island. This flooded the low-lying lands on the Thai side of the border.

5. The Burmese Consul-General in Chiangmai visited the area on May 23 and in an informal conversation later told the Consulate that in his opinion the Thais had purposely created the incident at Mae Sai in the hope that a meeting of the border commission would be called. He said that before the Thais constructed their dam at Pah Sang the main channel was on the Thai side of the island. He saw the diversion of the river as an attempt by the Thais to gain territory that was rightfully Burmese.

6. Some Thai officials in Mae Sai want to retaliate by closing the border at Mae Sai to the Burmese, but so far have not gained Bangkok's consent. On May 28 Governor Choosanga Chaiyapand was present at a meeting of amphur officials where the issue was discussed. Two military observers present at the meeting, Lt. General Kriangsakdi Chamanand and Group Captain Chinda Ramindra, accompanied him to Bangkok the following day.



Donald C. Ellison  
American Vice Consul

CONFIDENTIAL